

ACC OTTAWA MOUNTAINEERING CAMPS GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPANTS

This document provides generic guidance for the organization and running of ACC Ottawa mountaineering camps. Camp Managers may adapt the guidance as appropriate for the circumstances of specific camps.

CAMP CONCEPT

The camp concept will be defined in a camp prospectus, which will be subject to review, revision as necessary and approval by the Executive prior to the camp announcement.

ACC Ottawa mountaineering camps are planned, organized and run by unpaid section volunteers. These camps require a considerable amount of work – both in advance of and during the camp - to plan, organize and run. Therefore, participant understanding, co-operation and involvement will be much appreciated by the camp leaders and other camp participants.

Our camps have a culture of:

- everyone striving to be team players
- all participants going the “extra mile” to ensure an enjoyable experience for all
- more experienced members assisting less experienced participants to safely and incrementally expand their skills and experience
- following leave-no-trace environmental practices, leaving the mountains and the hut or campsite cleaner than we found them

ORGANIZATION

The typical organization for a mountaineering camp comprises:

- Camp Manager
- Assistant Camp Manager
- Climbing Leader
- Camp Participants

Camp Manager: The Executive will appoint an experienced Camp Manager for each camp. Where possible, an Assistant Camp Manager will also be named. He/She will assist the Camp Manager and fill in for them in their absence. The Camp Manager has overall responsibility and authority to plan, organize and manage camp operations. Much of camp organization involves implementing the camp plan, coordinating logistics, developing and implementing contingency plans (when needed) and handling camp finances. Participants may be asked to assist with various logistics tasks.

During camp operation, the Camp Manager’s goals are to:

- assist camp participants in achieving their climbing objectives - to the extent that route difficulty, mountain and weather conditions, and individual abilities permit
- foster a safe climbing environment for all participants
- organize camp logistics tasks with a fair labour distribution amongst participants

Climbing Leader: The Camp Manager will appoint a Climbing Leader, usually the most experienced and capable mountaineer attending the camp. The Climbing Leader will be responsible for:

- organizing climbing equipment
- suggesting climbing objectives appropriate for the conditions and individual and team capabilities
- overseeing climbing safety
- evaluating climbing plans and, where appropriate, suggesting alternative objectives and teams.

Camp Participants: Camp participants should:

- provide a realistic appraisal of their mountaineering experience to camp leaders
- arrive at camp physically fit and with the appropriate equipment
- moderate their climbing objectives and dampen their risk-taking enthusiasm to fit the environment of a club (group) trip versus a private trip
- volunteer generously for the numerous small jobs necessary to run the camp
- be understanding and supportive of camp participants with less experience
- be considerate of their fellow participants and camp volunteers

FINANCES

Our camps are break-even events. Each participant pays his/her share of the total camp costs. The Camp Manager will prepare a budget in advance of the camp with estimated costs, including a reasonable contingency allowance. Actual costs will be reconciled after the camp with participants making up any shortfall or receiving a refund, as appropriate. Some costs, such as transportation to/from the trailhead and local accommodation and meals before and after the camp, are usually outside the camp budget and are an individual responsibility.

Participants will be required to pay the full amount of the estimated camp cost in advance of the camp. The payment and refund policy and schedule will be determined for each camp as follows:

- 1) A commitment deposit to secure a position on the camp roster. A participant's position on the camp roster is not secured until they pay this deposit. This amount, normally 25% of the estimated camp cost/person, is NOT refundable under ANY circumstances, unless the camp is cancelled.
- 2) A final payment for the balance of the camp fee – due approximately one month before the camp. The Camp Manager will let the camp participants know the amount of this payment.

In the event the participant withdraws from the camp, this payment will be refunded only if a suitable replacement is found.

- 3) When the camp costs have been reconciled after the camp, camp participants will be notified if they are due a refund or if they owe funds for any shortfall.

The standard policy is that all camp participants must be paid-up ACC Ottawa Section members when they sign-up for and participate in the camp. Should the Camp Manager determine that it would be in the best interests of the camp to open attendance to other ACC members, he/she may request the Executive to approve an exception to the policy for that specific camp.

SAFETY

Prior to the camp, the Camp Manager will prepare and distribute a [Safety and Emergency Response Plan](#). The core of the plan will follow good general mountaineering practices and remain consistent from year to year. Additional provisions will be included for the expected conditions and group experience level at each specific camp.

Each evening, team leaders will discuss their proposed climbing plans for the following day with the Camp Manager and Climbing Leader. The preferred approach is to have no more than two ropes of two climbers per objective for fast and efficient climbing, minimal climber-generated rock fall hazard, a combined rope of four on glacier segments and mutual backup in case of difficulties. However, other rope team compositions may be appropriate for some situations.

The Camp Manager and Climbing Leader each have a veto over proposed climbing plans. In the event of a veto being exercised, alternative climbs will be suggested more appropriate for the abilities of the climbing team and the current mountain conditions.

Each participant is responsible for his/her own safety. Individuals will form their own climbing teams, keeping in mind the camp ethic of assisting in the development of less experienced participants. While climbing, each rope team will make their own decisions on the spot regarding appropriate actions to take depending on their expertise, experience and the actual conditions found on the climb. These actions are expected to be generally consistent with the Camp Safety and Emergency Response Plan.

Safety incidents will result in a discussion with the Camp Manager and Climbing Leader on ways to improve climbing safety. Persistent unsafe practices may result in the associated individual(s) not being invited back to subsequent camps. In extreme cases, the Camp Manager may ask the offending person(s) to depart the camp early. The Camp Manager will report any serious accident in accordance with ACC National policies.